

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 CU-02 MCT-01 IO-13 OC-06  
CCO-00 /088 W  
-----141956Z 027811 /43

P R 141813Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3337  
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE  
AMCONSUL MILAN  
AMCONSUL NAPLES

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 4147

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINS, IT  
SUBJECT: STUDENT DEMONSTRATION LEADS TO URBAN WARFARE

1. SUMMARY. ALL THE CONDITIONS FOR DISORDER WERE PRESENT MARCH 12 WHEN TENS OF THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS ASSEMBLED IN ROME. FEW WERE SURPRISED WHEN VIOLENCE ERUPTED, BUT THE SCALE OF THE ACTIONS AND THE OBIOUS PRE-PLANNING REPRESENTED AN ESCALATION IN THE WAR OF THE NEW YOUTH EXTREMISM AGAINST THE STATE. ALL POLITICAL PARTIES CONDEMN THE RESORT TO VIOLENCE, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN NEW POLICE MEASURES. UNLESS MORE EFFECTIVE MEASURES CAN BE TAKEN AGAINST THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE VIOLENCE, NEW OUTBREAKS MAY BE EXPECTED. END SUMMARY.

2. THE IDEA FOR THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATION WHICH TOOK PLACE IN ROME ON MARCH 12 GREW OUT OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH EXPLODED ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES THROUGHOUT ITALY BEGINNING IN EARLY FEBRUARY. AS THE DATE FOR THE DEMONSTRATION APPROACHED, A CHAIN OF INCIDENTS CULMINATING IN THE  
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MORTAL VIOLENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA ON MARCH 11 RAISED STUDENT EMOTIONS TO A FEVER PITCH. NEVOUSNESS AND CONCERN MUST ALSO HAVE DOMINATED THE RANKS OF THE POLICE MASSED IN ROME TO CONFRONT THE DEMONSTRATION WHEN THEY HEARD, EARLY ON MARCH 12, OF THE COLD-BLOODED ASSASSINATION OF ONE OF THEIR COLLEAGUES IN TURIN.. THUS, BY THE TIME THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF STUDENT DEMONSTRA-

TORS ASSEMBLED--MANY OF THE ONES FROM OUTSIDE ROME HAD BEEN BROUGHT IN ON SPECIAL TRAINS LAID ON BY THE GOVERNMENT-RUN RAILWAY--THE PREVAILING EXPECTATION WAS FOR VIOLENCE. DESPITE THE POURING RAIN, DEMONSTRATORS CAME PREPARED FOR ACTION--ONE EYEWITNESS JOURNALIST SAID THAT OVER HALF OF THE MARCHERS WERE ARMED AT LEAST WITH A HEAVY CLUB. OTHERS BROUGHT MOLOTOV COCKTAILS, KNIVES, EXPLOSIVES, IRON BARS, BAGS OF STONES, AND FIREARMS.

3. THE DEMONSTRATION RESULTED IN DAMAGE TO PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PROPERTY THAT WILL SURELY BE MEASURED IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS, AND IT SEEMS MIRACULOUS THAT ONLY TWENTY PERSONS--FOURTEEN POLICE AND SIX DEMONSTRATORS--WERE INJURED. DESPITE THE CLAIMS OF THE LEFTIST PRESS, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE VIOLENCE WAS NEITHER RANDOM NOR CARRIED OUT ONLY BY SMALL GROUPS OF PROVOCATEURS PRESENT IN AN OTHERWISE PEACEFUL MASS OF MARCHERS. ON THE CONTRARY, DURING THE MARCH DIFFERENT GROUPS OF TWO OR THREE HUNDRED MARCHERS BROKE AWAY FROM THE MAIN COLUMN TO ATTACK SEEMINGLY PREARRANGED TARGETS IN A COORDINATED FASHION. POLICE STATIONS, FIREARMS STORES, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND COMUNIONE E LIBERAZIONE OFFICES, AND BUSINESS PLACES THOUGHT TO BE FREQUENTED BY NEO-FASCISTS WERE SINGLED OUT IN A CAMPAIGN OF URBAN WARFARE. POLICE RESOURCES WERE STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT AND SOMETIMES COULD ONLY ACT TO PREVENT THE DESTRUCTION FROM SPREADING BEYOND LIMITED AREAS.

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4. THE VIOLENCE IN ROME WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN MANY ITALIAN CITIES. ARMORED VEHICLES WERE USED TO CONTROL THE SITUATION IN DOWNTOWN BOLOGNA. THERE WERE OTHER INCIDENTS IN TURIN, MILAN AND PADOVA.

5. AS CIVIC AUTHORITIES SOUGHT TO CLEAR UP THE CAPITAL CITY, MINISTER OF INTERIOR COSSIGA ANNOUNCED AN ABSOLUTE BAN UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE ON ALL PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS IN ROME. COSSIGA CALLED THE ROMAN INCIDENTS "PRE-PLANNED GUERRILLA WARFARE," AND WARNED THAT THE PRUDENCE OF THE AUTHORITIES IN LIMITING THE USE OF FORCE BY THE POLICE SHOULD NOT BE MISTAKEN AS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS. IN AN INTERVIEW,

COSSIGA HINTED THAT A RESORT TO MARITAL LAW WAS NOT OUT OF QUESTION.

6. WITH VARYING ACCENTS, ALL THE POLITICAL

PARTIES CONDEMNED THE VIOLENCE. CALLING UPON ITALIANS TO HAVE "STEADY NERVES," THE DC NEWSPAPER BRANDED THE PERPETRATORS OF THE VIOLENCE AS, CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, "RED FASCISTS". THE NEWSPAPER WENT ON TO ACCUSE THE PCI OF FOLLOWING AN AMBIGUOUS LINE BY CALLING FOR LAW AND ORDER BUT CRITICIZING POLICE OPERATIONS WHENEVER EFFECTIVE ACTION IS TAKEN. PCI COMMENTS ON THE ROMAN EPISODE WERE BASED ON THE VIEW THAT AN OTHERWISE PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION WAS MARRED BY THE ACTIONS OF A FEW PEOPLE. THE PARTY NEWSPAPER, L'UNITA, HINTED THAT THE VIOLENCE IN BOLOGNA WAS SOMEHOW PART OF A DARK PLOT TO DISCREDIT PCI ADMINISTRATION OF THAT CITY. THE SOCIALISTS, IN CRITICIZING THE RESORT TO VIOLENCE, CALLED ATTENTION TO THE REAL AND UNDENIABLE SOCIAL CAUSES OF THE UNREST AMONG ITALIAN YOUTH. BEAUDRY

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P R 141813Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3338  
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE  
"AMCONSUL MILAN 4115  
AMCONSUL NAPLES

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
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7. PM ANDREOTTI HAS ALREADY BEGUN A SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH INTERIOR MINISTER COSSIGA AND EDUCATION MINISTER Malfatti IN ORDER TO CONSIDER FURTHER ACTION AGAINST THE CAUSE AND SYMPTOMS OF YOUTH UNREST. IN A STATEMENT, ANDREOTTI CALLED FOR THE QUICK ADOPTION OF PENDING LEGISLATION ON YOUTH

EMPLOYMENT AND PUBLIC ORDER AND DID NOT EXCLUDE THE  
INTRODUCTION OF NEW LEGISLATION.

8. COMMENT: THE NEW VIOLENCE IS THE LATEST CREST  
OF THE WAVE OF DISORDER WHICH HAS BEEN ROLLING OVER  
ITALY FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. SO FAR, EACH CREST HAS  
BEEN HIGHER THAN THE ONES BEFORE, AND THE TIDE SHOWS  
NO SIGN OF ABATING. THE UTTER LACK OF EMPLOYMENT  
PROSPECTS FOR A GREAT PORTION OF THE NATION'S YOUTH,  
COMBINED WITH THE FAILURE OF THE EDUCATIONAL  
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SYSTEM TO DEAL WITH THE NEEDS OF AN ARTIFICIALLY-  
SWOLLEDN MASS OF STUDENTS, HAS GIVEN RISE TO A  
GENERATION WITHOUT PROSPECTS. THE GOVERNMENT CORRECTLY  
INTERPRETS THE CAUSES OF THE UNREST, BUT THE REQUIREMENTS  
OF ECONOMIC AUSTERITY MAKE AN EFFECTIVE SHORT-TERM  
APPROACH TO THE PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT  
VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE. EACH TIME THAT THE POLITICAL  
FORCES CALL FOR ACTION AND DO NOTHING, THE CYNICISM  
OF YOUTH WITH REGARD TO THE SYSTEM INCREASES. TO  
A LESSER DEGREE, THE ITALIAN POLICE FORCES ALSO  
FEEL THEMSELVES A DISINHERITED CLASS. THEY SEE  
THEMSELVES TARGETED BY TERRORISTS AND DEMONSTRATORS  
AND UNDERPAID AND LEGALLY HANDCUFFED BY THE STATE.  
(DURING THE SATURDAYS INCIDENTS IN ROME, TENSIONS AMONG  
THE POLICE REPORTEDLY ROSE TO THE POINT WHERE OFFICERS  
HAD TO QUELL MUTINOUS BEHAVIOR AMONG THE TROOPS).  
FACED WITH THESE DEVELOPMENTS, FEAR AMONG THE GENERAL  
PUBLIC IS INCREASING AND THE ENSUING BACKLASH EFFECT  
HAS THE POTENTIAL OF CRATING ITS OWN POLICAL  
DIMENSIONS WHICH THE VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES WILL  
HAVE TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION.BEAUDRY

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## Message Attributes

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